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ENG 3009G-005: Myth and Culture

David Radavich
Eastern Illinois University

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English 3009C: Myth and Culture

Instructor: Dr. David Radavich
 Office: 319 Coleman Hall
 Telephone: 581-6971 (Office) or 345-9280 (Home)

Required Texts:

Buck, trans., *Mahabharata*
 Eliot, *The Universal Myths*
 Neihardt, *Black Elk Speaks*
 Sandars, trans., *The Epic of Gilgamesh*

PURPOSE. This course provides an introduction to myths from around the world, supplementing other courses on the Bible as Literature and Backgrounds of Western Literature. We will study the common foundations that define and link legends from different cultures, and then examine non-Western literary masterpieces that incorporate mythic characters, techniques, and sensibility. Our goal will be two-fold: 1) to deepen our understanding of how mythology encodes, defines, and shapes our most fundamental beliefs about the world and the meaning of human life; and 2) to broaden our awareness of how mythic stories unfamiliar to us nonetheless embody similar concepts and values. By studying such great works as *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, *The Mahabharata*, and *Black Elk Speaks*, we will not only become engrossed in fascinating, gripping stories, but also confront our own mythic attitudes and pre-conceptions. Think of the course as an exotic journey to places where magical transformations can, and do, happen.

ASSIGNMENTS. Three papers will be required: one shorter essay (ca. 3-4 pages), a prospectus, and one longer essay (ca. 6-8 pages) using outside sources. There will be a midterm and a final exam. In-class quizzes and exercises will be given periodically over the readings to generate topics for class discussion. Everyone will be required to keep a reading journal, which may be used for writing papers and for the essay portion of each exam.

GRADING. Evaluation of your work will be demanding and fair and will include an assessment of your class preparedness and participation. The first paper will make up 10%, the prospectus 5%, and the third paper 20% of the course grade. The midterm exam will count 15% and the final exam 25%. Active participation in discussion and performance on in-class exercises will constitute the remaining 25% of the overall grade.

LATE WORK. Assignments turned in late will be penalized one-third grade PER CALENDAR DAY late. Missed in-class quizzes cannot be made up; that is the reward for coming to class regularly.

ATTENDANCE POLICY. You are assumed to be professionals-in-training and are expected to attend class regularly as you would show up for work on the job. The attendance policy for the course will operate as follows: you may miss up to one week of class without penalty; this allows you flexibility in case of illness or unexpected emergency. Thereafter, the course grade will be lowered

proportionately for each week missed. If you are absent more than four weeks of class, you will automatically receive an F in the course.

PLAGIARISM. According to University policy,

Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism - "The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's original work" (*Random House Dictionary of the English Language*) - has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of **F** for the course.

CONFERENCES. Please feel free to consult me regarding ideas, planning, problems, revision, etc. I would be happy to meet with you at any mutually convenient time.

INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES. If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

English 3009C Assignments (Radavich)

- Aug. 23 - Introduction
25 - Rituals; Origins of the Universe
27 - Death and the Afterlife
- Aug. 30 - "Creators of Nature and Mankind," first half
Sept. 1 - "Creators of Nature and Mankind," second half
3 - "Distant Quests and Mortal Tests," first half
- Sept. 6 - No class; Labor Day
8 - "Distant Quests and Mortal Tests," second half
10 - *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, pp. 7-8, ch. 1
- Sept. 13 - *Gilgamesh*, chs. 2-3
15 - *Gilgamesh*, ch. 4
17 - *Gilgamesh*, ch. 5
- Sept. 20 - *Gilgamesh*, chs. 6-7; review
22 - PAPER #1 DUE
24 - "Lovers and Bearers of Divine Seed," first half
- Sept. 27 - "Lovers and Bearers of Divine Seed," second half
29 - "Combat in Heaven and on Earth," first half
- Oct. 1 - "Combat in Heaven and on Earth," second half
- Oct. 4 - MIDTERM EXAM
6 - *The Mahabharata*, ch. 1
8 - No class; Fall Break
- Oct. 11 - *Mahabharata*, chs. 2-3
13 - *Mahabharata*, chs. 4-5
15 - Review & Discussion
- Oct. 18 - *Mahabharata*, chs. 6-7
20 - *Mahabharata*, chs. 8-9
22 - *Mahabharata*, chs. 10-11
- Oct. 25 - *Mahabharata*, chs. 12-13
27 - *Mahabharata*, chs. 14-15
29 - *Mahabharata*, chs. 16-17
- Nov. 1 - *Mahabharata*, chs. 18-19
3 - *Mahabharata*, ch. 20 and Review
5 - PROSPECTUS DUE

Nov. 8 - "Bringers of Magic and the Arts," first half
10 - "Death and Rebirth," first half
12 - Overview and trouble-shooting

Nov. 15 - *Black Elk Speaks*, Preface, chs. 1-2
17 - *Black Elk*, ch. 3
19 - PAPER #2 DUE

Nov. 22-26 - Thanksgiving Break

Nov. 29 - *Black Elk*, chs. 4-6
Dec. 1 - *Black Elk*, chs. 14-16
3 - *Black Elk*, chs. 17-20

Dec. 6 - *Black Elk*, chs. 21-24
8 - *Black Elk*, ch. 25 and Postscript
10 - Review and Discussion

FINAL EXAM